

learned this from a lady at Drop In Stitches in Stevenage, Helen Laudwell and have been grateful to her ever since. Helen discovered it by accident having gone to a club to demonstrate a cut and sew neckline and forgotten the sewing machine! Thank goodness she did because I now use this neckline frequently. I call it

HELEN'S UNCONVENTIONAL CUT AND SEW

Knit two backs of the garment, leaving approximately 38 stitches for the back of the neck and join both shoulder seams.

Ribbers: Cast on 130 stitches for one by one rib and knit 30 rows. Transfer stitches to the main bed and knit two rows stocking stitch. Knit a few rows waste yarn and remove from the machine.

Without a ribber: Use a one by one mock rib, but use the cast on closed edge method (e-wrap) using 130 stitches. Knit 30 rows at rib tension. Pick up the heel of the work stitch and place it on the empty needle along the row. Knit two rows at main tension and take the work off on to waste yarn.

All machines: Right side of garment facing. From one shoulder seam, pin the neckband along the back neck, usually a third of the knitted band. Drape the rest of the band across the front neck which will fall into a natural curve.

Pin in place and then backstitch through the last row of stocking stitch on the band.

Unravel waste yarn and cut away the surplus knitting around the front neck, leaving a seam allowance of approximately half an inch from the line of back stitching. Fold the band to the wrong side over this seam, pin in place and slip stitch the cast on edge of the band over the line of back stitching. This hides the cut edge of the knitting.

Suggested numbers for casting on are: 120 stitches for children, 130 stitches for ladies and 140 stitches for men. If using three ply then add on ten stitches to these numbers.

This technique is hair-raising the first time round, but I've used it for garments worn by my grandchildren aged seven, four and three years ever since with no disastrous results and now for myself and others in the family. Proof that it works! Looks good too!

I also saw a lovely tuck lace button-up jacket in Argyl Fluffy at Drop In Stitches. Again two backs had been knitted then cut up the front after the bands had been applied by the above method. It looked most professional and no one would have guessed how it

had been done. I am most grateful to Helen Laudwell for showing me this method and for allowing me to give the method here.

V NECKS

So far I have not cut and sewn a V neck because I like the stocking stitch band that I described last month.

That is not altogether true: I once cut out a V neck on a stretch fabric tee shirt I was making, or attempting to make. You will all realise my success with sewing, so I ended up with a V neck back and front! Did I start the fashion I wonder?

As if it is not enough to confess to that, I recently attended a Brother seminar and used their super overlocker and cut the wrong piece out!! Put me near any type of sewing machine and disaster not only looms up, it gallops! My mother was apprenticed to a Court dressmaker for three years and then worked on gorgeous creations for the Season, then she had me. . .! At least I was the best dressed child for miles and it did leave me with a craving for design if nothing else.

Back to the knitting!

LARGE SIZE PATTERNS

A sad letter from a lady in Weymouth who wants to knit for her husband who is a 54 to 56 inch chest. Our friend cannot work out a pattern and would like to know how to cope.

Our Editor has some patterns for larger sizes, but I do not know if they go up to 56 inch chest. Do write to her enclosing a stamped addressed envelope and she will send you copies.

Without patterns, to get larger sizes on the standard gauge machines may mean using tuck stitch. Card one can produce a garment in the region of 50 to 52 inches in four ply. Another trick is to insert a front and back panel like this.

(take in diagram)

with perhaps stocking stitch either side with a tuck stitch front, or different panels of tuck stitch, Fair Isle or just stocking stitch with other colours. These panels are then mattress stitched together so that joining does not show. It could be finished with a bought or machine made braid placed over the join if the mattress stitching is not too good.

The whole procedure would, of course, have to be worked out. The sleeves would need to be much wider and the easiest answer would be to invest in a charting device.

The other answer would be cardigans, either V necks or button-up Golfers. This way the fronts can be made larger, where most large people actually require the width. Again, sleeves must be

larger at the top and the drop shoulder sleeve is the easiest to work out.

I will illustrate this using the fronts as an example. If your tension swatch is giving 28 stitches and 40 rows to ten centimetres or four inches (seven stitches and 10 rows to 2.5 centimetres or one inch), the fronts would each need to be 14 inches wide to make the combined front equal 28 inches across, plus the width of the bands. Therefore, seven stitches multiplied by 14 inches equals 98 stitches for each front.

The length would have to be measured for the person you are knitting for, from the back neck down to the point required and that length multiplied by 10 (rows to one inch) to give the number of rows required.

The neck shaping would need to be wider than average and I think I would opt for a cut and sew neckline.

The sleeve top would require the top of arm measurement plus two to three inches ease and you can work out from there how many stitches would be needed for the top. Then join the shoulders back and front and pick up round the armhole edge the required number and knit the sleeve down. If the decreasing down the arm bothers you, then knit straight down to the cuff edge, take off on waste yarn and knit the cuff separately and attach

the sleeve to the cuff.

All this would need working out first on paper from the measurements of the person and from the swatch.

Apart from the larger size patterns available from the Editor, does anyone know of any larger sized patterns? There does seem to be a need for charting patterns, both half and full scale, in the 50 inch plus size, as well as written and diagrammatic patterns. I do not think the need is that great, but certainly from letters and from talking to knitters, a small number are not being catered for. These are the people who have usually bought a knitting machine because the daunting task of hand knitting for the 50 inch plus is too much.

Perhaps our Editor will bear in mind the occasional large size pattern for the magazine!

Well, it must be about time that I ran down again. I think I have covered a fair amount of ground and if you have a good idea connected with any of the techniques described here that works for you, do write in and share it with us.

None of these things are specifically for Toyota machines, just items that have cropped up in your letters. If you like them, then share them with another knitter, whatever their machine.

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